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Exploration and Discovery.

THE recent reports from Dr. Edgar J. Banks, the Field Director of the Expedition of the Exploration Fund of the University of Chicago, are very satisfactory. The trouble with the Arabs has been amicably arranged. In his latest report (No. 13) from Bismya, dated March 25, Dr. Banks writes: "Since my last report the excavations have been carried on but four days on account of severe sand storms, religious feasts, trouble with an Arab sheikh, and my absence in Kut-el-Amara to meet Mrs. Banks and Mr. Paige. The finds, as you will see from the inclosed list, are of considerable interest."

"I am not yet certain as to the nature of this ruin (III) where we are now excavating. It may be a single palace, or a number of small houses and narrow streets. If the latter be the case, the streets are about a meter wide, and along them are placed water jars. All of the tablets found in this ruin are near the surface, and none have appeared lower than two meters. In one room excavations have been carried to the depth of twelve meters, and even at that depth walls and fragments of pottery appear. The tablets, which seem to be found in groups of from ten to twenty, are all inscribed with the same ancient character of Sargon's time, and the frequent occurrence of his name and the appearance of the name of Naram Sin lead me to suppose that Sargon and Naram Sin once lived here. It seems best to continue the work at III, for the tablets are of unusual antiquity, easy to excavate, and the other finds are of interest."

"On March 13 we received a telegram saying that Mrs. Banks and Mr. Paige were on their way up the Tigris, but as the boat was not allowed to stop at Kut-el-Amara, they would be obliged to continue to Bagdad. The next morning, during a severe sand storm, I started overland for Kut, and on the way I passed three ruins which, I am inclined to believe, have not been visited by other Europeans. The first mound, about an hour from Bismya, is low and unpromising; I could not learn its name. The second, an hour farther on, is Lubeiya, of about the same height as Bismya, but far less extensive. On the surface of the lower parts are numerous fragments of blue, glazed, slipper shaped coffins, on one of which I saw the face of a woman.

Half an hour still farther on is Ruaiya, a smaller but higher ruin surmounted with masonry of square Babylonian bricks. I saw no inscriptions, but one of my workmen brought me a most archaic tablet which he said came from there."

"At Kut the Kaimakam placed a house at my disposal, and with the aid of Consul Hurner we obtained from the Vali of Bagdad permission for the boat to stop on its return, and on March 18 Mrs. Banks and Mr. Paige arrived at Kut safely and in good health. The next day we started down the Shatt-el-Hai in a sailboat, but on account of exceedingly strong south winds we were three days on the way. It seemed impracticable to return by the shorter overland route on account of the amount of baggage and the insecurity of the country. On March 23 we left Kut-el-Hai for Bismya, a distance of about eight hours by horse. A sand storm came up, and, losing our course, we found ourselves, after six hours, on the road to Kut, still six hours from Bismya and among a most dangerous Arab tribe. We were attacked and followed by the Arabs, and the frightened muleteers were inclined to leave the baggage to be plundered, but, aiming my rifle at the head muleteer, and riding ahead, I forced them to follow me, and the attacking Arabs soon gave up. We lost nothing. The animals were heavily laden, and some of them fell beneath their loads, but we continued toward Bismya until two hours after dark, and then, fearing that we might not be in the right course, stopped in the open desert for the night. We had ridden twelve hours that day. In the morning, as we dug ourselves from beneath the sand which nearly buried us, Bismya was but half an hour away."

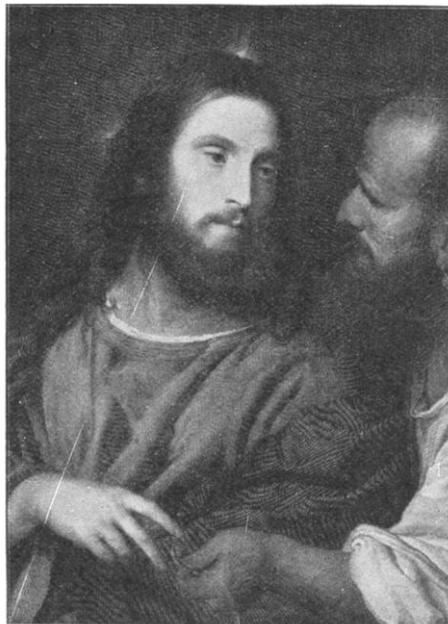
"During my absence work at the excavations had been continued but two days, for one of the so-called owners of Bismya came to collect money from the workmen. As I had instructed in case of trouble, Ahmed stopped the excavations, and Sheikh Selman, seeing his profits cut off, at once drove away the pretending owners. At the present time we are having festivals in honor of Hassan and Hussein, whose death all the Shiites are lamenting."

"I have asked Mr. Paige to prepare a report explaining the delays and expenses of his trip. As nearly as I can judge, the delays are the result of circumstances. Cholera in Busreh and Bagdad, the refusal of the river boats to take passengers, and the quarantine at almost every point justify the delay after their arrival at Busreh. Mr. Paige has now begun work in the photographic room. I shall now be able to supplement my reports with photographs and plans."

"I am pleased to report that the trunk of books, medicines, etc., which was lost in Busreh, has been found, and is now at Bismya, and that the equipment of the old expedition is fairly complete. In a later report I will submit a list of the objects of that outfit."

ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER, *Director.*

HASKELL ORIENTAL MUSEUM,
May 16, 1904.



JESUS AND PETER.